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SUBJECT: FINNS ASK 8 EU COUNTRIES TO JOIN IWC

REF: SECSTATE 10537

¶1. (SBU) Econoff delivered reftel demarche on the recent meeting of the pro-conservation countries of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) to Esko Jaakkola, Environment Counsellor at the Finnish Ministry of the Environment. Jaakkola, who represented the Government of Finland at the meeting in Washington, welcomed the opportunity to participate and stressed that similar coordination meetings should happen more frequently in the future.

¶2. (SBU) In an effort to strengthen the position of the pro-conservation countries, Jaakkola said then Finnish Minister of the Environment Jan-Erik Enestam sent a letter late last year to 8 EU countries (Greece, Malta, Romania, Bulgaria, Poland, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia) asking them to join the IWC prior to its annual meeting this May in Anchorage, Alaska. While many of these EU countries may ultimately join the IWC, only Lithuania has communicated to the Finnish government that it plans to join prior to the annual meeting.

¶3. (SBU) Regarding Japan's Conference for the Normalization of the IWC, Finland is not/not planning to attend. According to Jaakkola, Switzerland is the only pro-conservation country that may still attend.

¶4. (SBU) Finland is planning to send two government officials (Jaakkola and one other) to the annual IWC meeting, along with one participant from a Finnish NGO (Finns for Whales).

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